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GENERAL FISHERIES COUNCIL FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION

Qawra, Malta 5-9 July 1993

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 1993

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For bibliographic purposes this document should be cited as follows:

General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean.
Report of the twentieth session
Qawra, Malta, 5-9 July 1993.
GFCM Report. No. 20. Rome, FAO.
1993. 48p.

M-40
ISBN 92-5-103393-5

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
OPENING OF THE SESSION	1
ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION	2
CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE FORTY-NINTH AND FIFTIETH SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	2
A. Review of the Report of the Forty-Ninth Session of the Executive Committee	2
B. Review of the Report on the Fiftieth Session of the Executive Committee	3
INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: MARCH 1989 - JUNE 1993	3
RECENT TRENDS IN MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT	5
A. Evidence for changes in fisheries production	5
B. Overview of the current status of Mediterranean resources	5
STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING FISHERY STATISTICS IN THE GFCM AREA	8
The STATLANT forms	9
The GFCM Bulletin of Fishery Statistics	9
Data needs for responsible fishing	11
FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: POSSIBLE OPTIONS	11
COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS IN THE GFCM AREA	12

FISHERY RESEARCH: NEEDS AND PRIORITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN 15

REVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL FISHERIES COUNCIL FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN 17

FINANCIAL SITUATION AND BUDGET: PROPOSAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBER STATES 19

ANY OTHER MATTERS 20

ELECTION OF OFFICERS 21

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION 21

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT 21

APPENDIX A - Agenda 23

APPENDIX B - List of Participants 25

APPENDIX C - List of Documents 31

APPENDIX D - Speech by the Hon. Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries 33

APPENDIX E - Opening Statement of Dr. W. Krone Assistant Director-General, a.i., FAO Fisheries Department 37

APPENDIX F - Report of the ad hoc Working Group on the principles to underline the new convention on fisheries and the conservation of living marine resources in the Black Sea 41

APPENDIX G - Decisions, Directives and Recommendations of the Twentieth Session of GFCM 45

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Twentieth Session of the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was held in Qawra, Malta, from 5 to 9 July 1993.

2. The Session was attended by 11 members of the Council. In addition, two non-members, the European Community (EC) and Japan, attended the Session as observers. A representative from the United Nations Environment Programme and observers from the Council of Europe and the International Commission for the Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea also attended the Session. The list of participants is given in Appendix B to this Report.

3. Participants were first welcomed by Mr E. Debernardi, Vice-Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Session. In his address, he extended the gratitude of the Council to the Maltese Government and to his Excellency, Mr Lawrence Gatt, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, for the excellent organization of the Session and the warm hospitality extended to participants. He gave a brief description of the major issues that were of concern to the GFCM member countries and called for further support to the Council activities by riparian countries.

4. His Excellency Lawrence Gatt, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, in his opening speech welcomed the participants to Malta. He pointed out that because of its central geographical situation, the island had always been a melting pot for Mediterranean civilizations. He expressed his gratitude to FAO for the assistance that it is providing to the Maltese Government.

5. His Excellency stressed the need for GFCM to adapt its mandate to the new concepts and programmes of action that were adopted under Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. The adoption of comprehensive conservation measures, the improvement of fishery statistics and the use of up-to-date technology for the monitoring of fishery resources also needed serious consideration and GFCM should assume a leading role in fisheries management and resources conservation issues. He also pointed out the role of aquaculture as a source of sea food supply and informed the Council that Malta was playing a leading role in offshore fishfarming. The full text of His Excellency's statement is given as Appendix D.

6. On behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Mr. Edouard Saouma, Mr. W. Krone, Assistant Director-General a.i. (Fisheries Department) expressed his pleasure in addressing the Twentieth Session of GFCM and in particular thanked the Government of Malta for the excellent preparations for the hosting of the Session. He noted that the Council remained a unique forum for the promotion and strengthening of multilateral cooperation. After introducing the new Secretary of GFCM, he summarized the main events that had taken place during the intersessional period both at the regional and global levels. He gave a brief on the state of the Mediterranean fisheries, mentioning the environmental deterioration in some sub-regions and its impact on the marine resources. He called for better collaboration in the field of collection of fisheries statistics and emphasized the need for information to be made available on high seas catches of non-Mediterranean fleets operating in the area and on the use of large-scale pelagic

drift nets. The Assistant Director-General a.i. mentioned some salient events of interest to the work of the Council including FAO's work on an international agreement on the flagging of vessels fishing on the high seas. He paid a particular tribute to the close collaboration which has developed with ICCAT, the EC and UNEP. He called on member countries to give their support to the Council in order that it can successfully carry out its mandate. The full text of Dr. Krone's statement is given in Appendix E.

7. The Chairman gave the floor to Mr. Loira Rua, Secretary-General of Marine Fisheries, Spain, who called for the building up of a common awareness that would guarantee the sustainable development of the fisheries sector and the protection of the marine environment. He referred to the implications that the growing demand for fish products combined with the growing efficiency of fishing techniques could have on the sustainability of the marine fish resources. He enumerated the most salient issues that had been raised during the intersessional period both at the regional and global levels: responsible fishing, reflagging of fishing vessels, the use of the large-scale pelagic drift nets. He emphasized the importance that his Government gave to the sustainability of resources, the protection of the marine environment, and the enforcement of measures aiming at the reduction of fishing effort. He informed the Council that his country had taken legal steps to prohibit or limit the use of some fishing techniques and to create marine reserves, install artificial reefs and enforce closed fishing seasons. The need for regional collaboration was put forward for consideration by the Council. Finally, he informed the Council that his country was working out with other EC member countries arrangements that aim at the harmonization of management measures and their possible application to other GFCM member countries.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

8. The Council adopted the agenda shown in Appendix A. The documents which were before the Session are listed in Appendix C.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE FORTY-NINTH AND FIFTIETH SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Review of the Report of the Forty-Ninth Session of the Executive Committee

9. The Council was informed that its Executive Committee had held its Forty-ninth Session on 11 and 12 March 1991 in Rome (Italy). The purpose of the Session was mainly to review the programme of work of the Council for the biennium 1991/1992. The Executive Committee agreed on the list of meetings proposed and charged the Secretariat to do everything possible to ensure that these meetings take place. The Executive Committee expressed its particular interest in the information provided by the Secretariat on the use of large-scale pelagic drifting nets and recommended that the issue be reviewed by the GFCM Committee on Fisheries Management at its next Session.

10. The Executive Committee reviewed the conclusions of the GFCM/ICCAT Expert

10. The Executive Committee reviewed the conclusions of the GFCM/ICCAT Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Stocks of Large Pelagic Fishes in the Mediterranean Area (Bari, June 1990) and noted GFCM Studies and Reviews No. 63 entitled Recent Trends in the Fisheries and Environment in the GFCM Area and requested the Secretariat to bring them to the attention of the Council (documents GFCM/XX/93/Inf.5 and GFCM/XX/93/Inf.12).

B. Review of the Report on the Fiftieth Session of the Executive Committee

11. The Council took note of the report of the Fiftieth Session of its Executive Committee which took place on 22 and 23 June 1992 in Rome. The Executive Committee reviewed the intersessional activities of the Council (January 1991 - June 1992) and agreed to include the Ionian and Adriatic Seas in the Central Mediterranean area when organizing the GFCM Technical Consultation on the stocks of that area and requested the Secretariat to submit the proposal to the Council for final approval.

12. The Council agreed on the Executive Committee recommendation and requested the Secretariat to take the necessary measures for its implementation.

13. The Council noted that the list of Directors of Fisheries in the Mediterranean area needed continuous updating and it was recommended that member countries continue to provide the Secretariat with any changes that may occur in the staffing of their respective Fisheries Departments.

14. The Council noted that the Executive Committee had had some doubts regarding the compliance of some fishing nations with the measures taken with a view to the limitation of the use of large pelagic drift nets in the Mediterranean.

15. The Council agreed on the Executive Committee's conclusion relating to the necessity for a new approach to fisheries management which should take into consideration the various aspects of the marine environment.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: MARCH 1989 - JUNE 1993

16. The Council was informed on the following intersessional activities:

In 1989

(i) a working group on artificial reefs

(ii) three Technical Consultations: one jointly with ICCAT on long-term trends and interaction between fisheries and environment in the Mediterranean area; one on the evaluation of stocks in the Balearic and Gulf of Lions Statistical Division; and the third on stocks of large pelagic fishes.

In 1990

(iii) the Forty-eighth Session of the Executive Committee

In 1991

(iv) the First Session of the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics, the Eighth Session of the Committee on Fisheries Management, the Forty-ninth Session of the Executive Committee and the Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In 1992

(v) the Fiftieth Session of the Executive Committee

In 1993

(vi) the Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea.

17. The Council was also informed that two Technical Consultations, one on the Evaluation of Stocks in the Central Mediterranean and another on the Balearic and Gulf of Lions Statistical Division were still awaiting formal invitations from the hosting countries.

18. The delegate of Tunisia offered to host the Technical Consultation on the Central Mediterranean in the event that Libya could not confirm its original offer.

19. The delegate from France on behalf of his country formally offered to host the Technical Consultation on the Balearic and Gulf of Lions Statistical Division.

20. The Council took note of the two offers and requested the Secretariat to pursue contacts with the authorities concerned with a view to holding these meetings at the earliest convenient time.

21. The Council underlined the importance of the regular meetings of working parties and technical consultations as a means of providing the basic analysis and assessment required for the management of fishery resources in the region. The possibility of institutionalizing such meetings and guaranteeing adequate frequency for them would be taken up under item 10 of the Agenda.

RECENT TRENDS IN MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT

A. Evidence for changes in fisheries production

22. The analysis of the Secretariat presented in document GFCM/XX/93/5 strongly suggests that despite a fishing intensity which had been at or beyond that which would be expected to yield the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), landings from the Mediterranean region have risen from some 0.96/km2 of shelf area in the early 1970's to reach or exceed the world average for the world's oceans of some 3.5 t/km2 of commercial fish and invertebrates in the early 1990's. The role of nutrient runoff seemed implicated in this progression, since the more pronounced increases have occurred in the enclosed basins of the Mediterranean, where remote sensing has already revealed higher levels of primary production than in the open sea and in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. That this nutrient input was not an unmixed benefit is illustrated in the case of the Black Sea, which was the subject of a recent consultation held in Ankara in February 1993 (document GFCM/XX/93/Inf.11) and showed how eutrophic processes had led to anoxia of shelf areas, and to a serious decline in demersal stocks in the 1970's - 1980's . The more recent and dramatic collapse of the anchovy stock of the Black Sea was seen as resulting from a combination of eutrophication, uncontrolled fishing, and the action of an exotic predator on fish larvae and their food, notably the Ctenophoran Mnemiopsis leydei, recently introduced from the West Atlantic.

23. The Council viewed with great concern reports of the recent spread of this species to the Sea of Marmara and Turkish Mediterranean, and urged the institution of monitoring programmes in areas of high risk - notably, the Nile Delta, Gulf of Lions and Adriatic Sea, where nutrient enrichment and lower salinity provided a favourable habitat. A study of the pelagic food web, anchovy, sardine and the role of jelly fish predators in nutrient-enriched systems was recommended for inclusion in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/SARP) with the collaboration of FAO. Concern was expressed at the disappearance of sardine catches in 1993 in the Gulf of Gabès, and this obviously merits priority investigation in the light of the above-mentioned events.

24. The Council heard with great interest reports on the support of the Secretariat for reactivation of a Black Sea Fishery Commission and progress towards including Black Sea fisheries reconstruction in the activities of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) project, signed in Varna, Bulgaria, on 30 May 1993. Close links should be preserved through Black Sea country members of GFCM with the activities now underway for fisheries reconstruction in the Black Sea, which could be of great practical and theoretical interest to all Mediterranean countries.

B. Overview of the current status of Mediterranean resources

25. The Council took note of the current status of full or over-exploitation of most demersal and shellfish populations in the Mediterranean, and the open access situation and high prices that have led to expansion of these fisheries. It was nonetheless considered disturbing that for the majority of demersal species and stocks, a formal assessment of the status of stocks was not yet

possible; and that most of our information on trends in fish abundance were dependent on statistical data, usually with large or unknown margins of error. Progress in assessment of stocks had been most noteworthy in the Western Mediterranean, but the Council urged member countries to devote more resources to evaluating resource status, and the following actions were specially singled out for priority attention:

(i) The uncertain accuracy of existing statistical information on fish catches and fishing effort obviously affected the reliability of the analysis by the Secretariat of fishery trends in the different basins of the Mediterranean. The need to use fully new techniques such as remote sensing to confirm statistical trends was emphasized. The effects of coastal pollution also need to be kept under surveillance using the same techniques, in particular, due to their importance as potential impacts on aquaculture. Closer collaboration between fisheries scientists and aquaculturist was recommended and with organizations such as IOC and UNEP.

(ii) Training in stock assessment and availability of standardized software for resource assessment, were seen as high priorities, in order that assessments be carried out in a uniform manner in each country, with comparable results.

(iii) The importance of the Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques for an integrated approach to coastal fisheries management stressed by document GFCM/XX/93/5, was reiterated. The Institut national scientifique et technique d'oceanographie et de peche of Tunisia (INSTOP) had used GIS techniques to set up the "Sea Observatory", a database of geographic information for the Gulf of Gabes from 1964 to the present, taking into account not only distribution of Posidonia beds, but also pollution sources and shrimping grounds. The Council recommended that the Secretariat continue to promote cooperative work on developing GIS systems for the Mediterranean, and ensuring that these systems are readily available to member countries.

26. FAO was requested to give priority to holding courses in stock assessment and associated technical measures such as databases, computer software use and GIS techniques, as opportunity and funding permit.

27. The Council encouraged efforts being made in a number of countries to protect habitats of importance to demersal fish stocks, and to prevent destructive fishing to systems of important interest such as Posidonia beds.

28. Protection of the monk seal is being effected by marine reserves along the Moroccan coast. There have also been reports of disturbing frequencies of deaths of small whales due to large-scale gillnets in the Western Mediterranean and the Council stressed the need to avoid unnecessary damage to other living resources in the course of fishing operations. Another conservation problem of major concern is that of the bluefin tuna, where continuing close

cooperation with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which has had the lead role in management of this species, is given high priority by the Council. Non-member countries of ICCAT are urged to respect the ICCAT regulations and to provide accurate catch and biological statistics to ICCAT, if necessary, through the GFCM Secretariat.

Exotic species

29. With respect to new species entering the Mediterranean, Israel noted that several new Red Sea fish have recently entered their fishery, notably Scomberomorus commerson and the Carangid Alepes sp. Registry with the FAO Identification Group of new species and their occurrence in commercial fisheries in different areas of the Mediterranean, was suggested as a useful means of keeping track of similar changes.

Artificial reefs and stock enhancement

30. A cooperative programme is underway in Tunisia with Greenpeace to install artificial fish habitats in the Gulf of Gabes, as part of a programme to provide alternative fishing options to fishermen and to prevent trawling operations in some nursery zones. Israel made reference to the priority now being given to stock enhancement in their waters, including artificial reefs, but is also exploring the possibility of sea ranching techniques, with release of juveniles from hatcheries into the sea.

Pelagic stocks

31. The Council viewed with concern the apparent decline in anchovy and some sardine stocks on a Mediterranean-wide basis, and a research programme for studying this problem should be developed by the Secretariat with collaboration of interested organizations. With respect to sardine and horse mackerel resources, the problem in many areas remains that of effective utilization of these species for human food, given large seasonal catches.

32. The Council noted with satisfaction the progress being made in research on large pelagic resources in the Mediterranean, and supports the continuance of regular joint meetings with ICCAT. It is clear however, that the poor statistical coverage of catches and fishing effort seriously limits the validity of any stock assessment.

High seas fisheries

33. The Council showed preoccupation with the level of high seas fishing in the Mediterranean on large pelagic fishes and requested the Secretariat to communicate this concern together with the need for much tighter control of exploitation by coastal and distant water fleets to the forthcoming UN Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

34. The observer from Japan noted that national catches of bluefin in the Mediterranean of 100-200 mt were in accord with the ICCAT recommendation, and were controlled by a fishery inspection vessel. He informed the Council that his country took a voluntary measure consisting of the enforcement of a closed season during the spawning season. Photographic evidence was provided of intensive fishing for bluefin under flags of convenience (Panama, Honduras flags etc.) and by the Republic of Korea and Taiwan (Province of China). Japan is also working with Morocco to promote artificial rearing of bluefin.

35. The firm opinion was expressed that whatever management regime evolves in future years within the GFCM management area, this should apply to fisheries within and beyond territorial seas, and coastal States are urged to support the development of common minimum standards for fishery management measures that, to the extent possible, apply throughout the distribution area of the resource in question.

STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING FISHERY STATISTICS IN THE GFCM AREA

36. At its Nineteenth Session, the Council changed the name of the Working Party on Stock Assessment and Statistics to the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics, and established terms of reference that included determining data needs in catch, effort, socio-economic factors and bio-economic analyses as well as to review existing data and recommend cost-effective methods of data collection. The first meeting of the Working Party was held in May 1991 and concluded that difficulties were being experienced in collecting reliable data, and that other sources of information (e.g. from port authorities, banks and the private sector) were being under-utilized, as were sample survey programmes. The data presently collected was also felt to be in a form that did not fully reflect the needs of management. The Working Party had recommended that member countries review their existing systems, their scope and coverage; place more emphasis on economic and social data to allow estimation of optimal economic fishing targets. A list of minimum data requirements should be drawn up with definitions of common concepts for the GFCM area, and assistance be given to those countries with insufficient means to establish valid data collecting systems. These findings were discussed at the Eighth Session of the Committee on Fisheries Management, where it was agreed:

- that statistical systems should be improved to some common level
- at a later stage, to improve the scope, coverage and accuracy of GFCM regional statistics.

37. The Executive Committee, in response to the recommendation of the Committee on Fisheries Management, requested the Secretariat to prepare a project document for consideration by the Council, whose objectives were threefold:

- to provide direct assistance to improving national statistical systems
- to establish a regional statistical network
- to establish a coordinating mechanism, eventually on a permanent basis, to coordinate this work.

38. The Council, while appreciating the objectives of the project, found it too academic and not representative of the human and financial resources available to many member countries. Such a project should be reconsidered, and if feasible, reformulated by a special meeting at which both government experts and those responsible for fishery policy were represented.

39. The Council also noted that donors usually considered the collection of statistics as a government responsibility, and that a project aimed at funding improvements in statistics should more appropriately emphasize networking and database maintenance aspects that need upgrading, as well as placing emphasis on the provision of data allowing analysis of the effects of management measures. The implementation of such a project was felt to be best postponed until a further review had been completed.

The STATLANT forms

40. The STATLANT questionnaires 37A and 37B should be compiled annually by statistical offices, but in 1991, only 11 and 7 respectively of the 24 countries in the Mediterranean area completed these forms. Form 37A was of course the basis for the GFCM Bulletin published biennially by FAO, and for the document GFCM/XX/93/Inf.14 "Trends in Catches and Landings - Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries", presented for the first time to the Council. Countries not doing so, were urged to undertake timely submission of this form. The STATLANT B form has received significant criticism in other regional fishery bodies because it is labour-intensive to complete, and the data in their present form rarely used by scientists. At the same time, the lack of data on fishing effort, or even up-to-date information on the size of fleets, is a serious impediment to stock assessment and to any eventual management measure based on control of fishing effort.

41. The Council was informed that France had developed a nationwide fisheries database, programmed so as to allow small-scale fisheries catch and/or effort data to be broken down and processed by gear, fishing area, landing area and species for all fishing craft of 10 m or over in length. Data can be satisfactorily inputted once a regulatory measure called the Monthly Production Declaration, currently in the pipeline, is operational. If the data of this structure were appropriately aggregated, it could easily be inputted with a database for the regionwide use.

42. The Council suggested that a review of the STATLANT B form be undertaken, with a view to improving means of collecting and storing fleet and effort data essential to assessment and regional management of resources. The Council welcomed the offer of the EC to host a meeting to review the STATLANT B form, and suggested that during this review, it would be useful to examine the current statistical coverage of the GFCM area, and requested the EC to consider the above meeting as a joint EC/GFCM meeting, with the participation of experts from outside the Community.

The GFCM Bulletin of Fishery Statistics

43. The Secretariat invited the views of the Council on whether continued publication of the GFCM Bulletin of Fishery Statistics was essential, given that cheaper and more immediate methods of transferring information between FAO and member countries of GFCM were now

available. Document GFCM/XX/93/Inf.14 contained all of the information available in the Bulletin, and could be transmitted to member countries in the form of a floppy diskette, readable on a standard IBM-compatible microcomputer, with the option of easily printing out the data in mimeo form. Countries may also find it more convenient to update such a database electronically, thus resulting in a faster turnaround of data and a saving of work time in entering and checking data. The Council took note of the new developments in networking which should soon make newer and more cost-effective data transfer systems feasible.

44. Delegates were generally in agreement with this solution, but requested that the savings effected should be used to carry out supplementary activities in the support of data gathering and storage for Mediterranean fisheries. The delegate from Malta noted that, in the absence of the approved project document as discussed earlier, advice to countries with inadequate skills to implement valid data gathering systems should be a priority for use of such savings.

45. The Council recognized that simply providing catches by statistical areas and sub-areas was no longer sufficient. Recent issues raised in international fora regarding high seas fisheries, and the Conference soon to be held at the United Nations on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, required some breakdown of catches on the high seas and in areas of national jurisdiction. There will, of course, be pressure to exempt areas such as the Mediterranean where EEZ claims have not been made, but there was continued interest to ascertain the condition of resources beyond national jurisdiction, where, in the case of the Mediterranean, the Council had not so far exerted the statutory powers incorporated in its Constitution. It must be in the interest of all Council members that the Secretariat be able to respond on behalf of member countries on the status of resources in its high seas area, and on the fleets and fishing pressure these stocks are currently subject to.

46. The need for improved fleet data was raised and the Council recognized that improved fleet data, if recorded by port of operation, should be very useful for a number of purposes, in addition to providing some measure of fleet tonnage per shelf area, or area of zone, that will allow comparison of the relative fishing pressure exerted in the different statistical subareas of the Mediterranean. It should also be useful for questions of allocation in comparing the performance of different fleets or gear types fishing a common resource.

47. The problem of obtaining improved data on the very important small-scale fishing sector was also seen as a high priority but very time consuming. There were indications, however, that this sector, which was rarely properly covered in standard national reporting systems, was growing in relative importance compared with the larger and more costly industrial sector. The Council recognized that despite the costs and complications of monitoring this sector, some sample estimates of its importance for randomly chosen coastal areas of the Mediterranean, would be essential to obtain a true picture of fishery productivity and how it was changing. The Council took note of the need for a database of fishing gear operating in the Mediterranean. It called for more explicit investigation of the incidental effects of fishing.

48. The Council was informed on the present initiative to arrive at an Agreement on the Flagging of Vessels Fishing on the High Seas to Promote Compliance with Internationally Agreed Management Measures such as those of organizations like the GFCM which have regional management competence. At present the draft Agreement would be restricted to

vessels, in areas where national jurisdiction claims have not been extended such as the Mediterranean, the length of which remains to be defined. The Council requested the Secretariat to provide advice to the next Committee on Fishery Management on what this size limit should be for the Mediterranean, as a preliminary to initiating a database on vessels by size and gear type currently operating within international waters in the Mediterranean.

Data needs for responsible fishing

49. The Council considered that development of a data base in support of management should usefully follow from the formulation of principles for fisheries management, and the data needs required for monitoring compliance by national fleets. The EC reported on such a database set up in the Northwestern Mediterranean for catch and effort data, whose design and contents will be made available to the Council through the Secretariat.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: POSSIBLE OPTIONS

50. The Council recognized that fisheries management in the Mediterranean was a necessary condition for the conservation of the resources and for sustainable development of the fisheries sector. In the introduction to the document, it was pointed out that demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean were now fully exploited, evidence of overfishing of demersal stocks existed for the Adriatic and Gulf of Lions, and for the Central Mediterranean the demersal stocks were either fully or heavily exploited. The status of stocks of pelagic resources was also described.

51. Urgent attention was required for the management of inshore demersal resources at the national level where fishing effort has increased. Scientifically-based management of the large pelagic stocks was viewed as difficult, however, in the absence of an appropriate legal framework for protecting such stocks from fishing by non-GFCM Member States.

52. The document presented an array of types of management measures, both input and output controls, for the consideration of the Council, with particular emphasis on the objectives for resource use compared with economic and social policy choices.

53. The Council discussed the alternative types of management measures and agreed that output controls such as the imposition of catch quotas was not appropriate for the Mediterranean, because of the extensive small-scale fleets operating along the coasts from many landing sites, and the frequently multispecies nature of harvests. Several delegations supported the need to bring overall fishing effort under control and suggested that an approach based on national shares of total fishing effort exerted on a common stock would be a more appropriate approach to management. It was recognized however that for such a scheme to be implementable, data would be required on fleet sizes and characteristics of vessels and gear and their operations.

54. The observer from the EC informed the Council of progress made by the Community in recognizing the special characteristics of fisheries in the Mediterranean for which there are major needs for regulating fishing effort and controlling access to the resources. The Community, in seeing how the Common Fisheries Policy can be applied to the Mediterranean, was concerned with issues both relating to the management of fishing effort within waters under the jurisdiction

of Member States, and the regulation of catches of Community vessels operating outside national waters. In this connection, a meeting opened to non-EC countries was convened in Palma de Mallorca, from 17 to 19 May 1993, in an approach to harmonizing management measures on a regional basis. Although no comprehensive scheme was decided upon, there was agreement on principles. The report of the meeting was provided to Members of the Council.

55. Other management techniques implemented by Member States were described and the wide diversity of the fisheries and fishing gears used was identified as an obstacle to reaching an agreement on harmonized regulations for the Mediterranean. It was agreed, however, that the Secretariat should prepare a review of existing regulations in GFCM member countries. On the basis of existing schemes it might be possible to develop a set of principles for fisheries management within the Mediterranean. These principles would encompass, among other issues, controlling fishing effort (mortality), protection of sensitive areas and juveniles, prohibition and restriction on the use of certain gears and characteristics of types of gear, as well as zoning or restrictions on areas for fishing. It was also stated that resource enhancement should be included within the principles for fisheries management.

56. The Council agreed that it was necessary to harmonize measures to protect resources and requested that the Secretariat develop a draft of 'Principles for the management of fisheries in the Mediterranean' for consideration by the Committee on Fisheries Management and subsequently by the Executive Committee and by the Council. The draft Principles would serve the purpose of providing guidance to national authorities in the management of resources extending outside national jurisdiction and be without prejudice to national legislation.

57. The observer from Japan informed the Council of activities of its fleets fishing tuna in the Mediterranean, and expressed concern at the increasing practice of flags of convenience used in the Mediterranean by States that were not members of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. The Council was informed that a research vessel from Japan would be conducting research from June to August 1994 on bluefin stocks in the Mediterranean.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS IN THE GFCM AREA

58. In introducing document GFCM/XX/93/8, the Secretariat informed the Council of the ever increasing need for close cooperation between the GFCM and the other organizations concerned with the various aspects of fisheries in the Mediterranean. The Council was informed that the Secretariat had established working relations with many of these organizations, particularly by sharing information on Mediterranean fisheries, remote sensing imagery, resource surveys and on environmental studies.

59. The Council welcomed the close collaboration established with the EC and noted that the membership of EC in the GFCM was still under consideration within the Community and among its member States.

60. The Council noted with satisfaction the cooperation between the Council and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). This cooperation was marked by two joint expert consultations held on large pelagic species as described under Agenda item 4 of this present report.

61. The Council reviewed the recommendation of the Second GFCM/ICCAT Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Stocks of Large Pelagic Species in the Mediterranean Area regarding the establishment of a joint Ad hoc Working Group on Large Pelagic Species. This working group would be composed of experts from GFCM and ICCAT member countries. Experts from non-member countries concerned with fisheries in the Mediterranean might also be invited to participate. The GFCM Secretariat would be entrusted with the administrative work while ICCAT would provide the technical secretariat. The Council supported this proposal.

62. Concerning cooperation of the GFCM with the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea (ICSEM), the Council considered that the two regional bodies had a complementary role to play. The observer from ICSEM stated that the Commission was carrying out valuable research that could be of great use to the GFCM in the field of fisheries management and the marine environment. Close collaboration between these two bodies would give additional value to the work of both GFCM and ICSEM. It was noted that research by ICSEM on exploited fish stocks was valuable for the work of the Council subsidiary bodies.

63. The Secretariat was requested to follow up closely with ICSEM on the possibility of using the Commission's studies on fisheries stocks in the formulation of fisheries management measures. The Secretariat was requested to build up closer collaboration with ICSEM for the benefit of the two organizations. Such collaboration would give an opportunity for ICSEM to become more closely involved in fisheries issues.

64. The Council was informed about the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and particularly its Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) which included the Long-term Programme of Pollution Monitoring and Research in the Mediterranean Sea. The Council requested the Secretariat to provide the member countries with information concerning the activities of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

65. The Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan informed the meeting that MEDPOL was under evaluation by an independent committee and that it was hoped that as a result of this evaluation, a new phase of the Programme would be implemented that would fully meet the needs of its member countries.

66. The Council noted that a strange phenomenon was taking place in the Gulf of Gabes where sardine stocks had disappeared in commercial quantities from the area. The Council was also informed that anchovy fisheries collapsed completely along the Moroccan Mediterranean coasts. The Council asked for information on the IOC Sardine and Anchovy Recruitment Programme (SARP) and requested that the Secretariat follow-up the matter with IOC/SARP in an effort to elucidate the causes of the two phenomena.

67. The Council took note with interest of the activities of the UNDP/FAO Mediterranean Regional Aquaculture Project (MEDRAP II) and expressed a strong interest in the continuation of cooperation in aquaculture among all countries in the region. The Council supported the principle of GFCM providing the overall coordination of activities of the aquaculture networks, as recommended by the Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the project. This would consist of:

- a regional network for environment and aquaculture activities to be coordinated by the Regional Activity Centre of the Priority Action Programme of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP-PAP/RAC)

- a regional network on aspects of research and advanced training in technology development, socio-economics and legislation, to be coordinated by the Centre International des hautes études agronomiques pour la Méditerranée (CIHEAM).

- a regional network on aquaculture information management (SIPAM: Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean Region), to be directly coordinated by GFCM.

68. The Council reviewed three possible alternatives for such coordination by GFCM:

(i) to establish a new Committee for Aquaculture Development;
(ii) to expand the role of the Committee on Fisheries Management with a view to it covering aquaculture matters;
(iii) to entrust an enlarged Executive Committee with this role.

The Council decided to discuss this issue further under item 10 of the Agenda.

69. Some delegates called for closer attention by the Council to the emerging regional body, the Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA) and expressed the hope that support from GFCM would be provided to the sub-regional research and development programmes that were being implemented by UMA.

70. The geographical information system (GIS) was found of good use for the monitoring and assessment of environmental changes. The delegate of Tunisia requested the Secretariat to provide his Institute with any information that might be available on the use of GIS in fisheries management.

71. The delegate of Turkey reported to the Council on the conclusions of the Ad hoc Working Group on the Principles to Underline the New Convention on Fisheries and the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in the Black Sea which was held on 3 and 4 June 1993 in Sozopal, Bulgaria. This report is appended as Appendix F to this report. He acknowledged the instrumental role that the Second GFCM Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea held in Ankara, Turkey (15-19 February 1993) had played in bringing together riparian countries and thus allowing the processes for the establishment of this new Convention to be substantially advanced.

FISHERY RESEARCH: NEEDS AND PRIORITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

72. The Secretariat introduced document GFCM/XX/93/9 which described the Study on International Fisheries Research (SIFR), and provided some indications of possible priorities for research on fisheries in the Mediterranean region.

73. In discussing the need for fisheries research, the Council recognized that presently there was no regional programme or project in support of fishery research in the Mediterranean. It was noted that the Study on International Fisheries Research (SIFR), carried out during 1988-1991, provided a strategic framework for future fishery research activities based on a general diagnosis on global fisheries research needs and priorities, but no specific research plans or programmes. The Council noted the establishment of an Executive Secretariat for Fishery Research, funded by the World Bank and UNDP and based at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada. Initiatives by FAO, such as the re-definition of name and mandate of the former Advisory Committee of Experts on Marine Resources Research (ACMRR) into an "Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research" (ACFR) and the establishment of a focal point of a Principal Fisheries Research Adviser in the FAO Fisheries Department were also noted with interest.

74. The Secretariat emphasized that SIFR follow-up activities were only starting and that there was a need for the elaboration of detailed national research plans and regional cooperative research programmes. The GFCM countries were invited to formulate project proposals to focus on specific research needs of sub-regional or regional relevance which could be presented to the donor community for financial support.

75. Several delegates highlighted research-related needs in various areas including stock assessment, biological and environmental factors influencing fisheries resources, food quality aspects, and integration of socio-economic considerations into fisheries development and management. It was also suggested that more research emphasis be given to microbiological, especially bacteriological aspects of diseases occurring in wild stocks. Research on the effects of nutrient enrichment on fishery resources should include dynamics of phytoplankton and zooplankton communities, also in relation to harmful algal blooms.

76. Reference was made to a regional fishery research programme elaborated some years ago which had not received donor support. The Secretariat was requested to review and update this programme. With regard to the subjects for fishery-related research set out in document GFCM/XX/93/9 the need for agreement and collaboration by the fishing industry was indicated, particularly in studies requiring long-term or periodic closures to fishing.

77. The Council agreed that all efforts should be taken by national fishery scientists and administrators to define clearly their most urgent research needs and priorities. It was also stated that any research activity should provide results which were useful to fishery managers and applicable to solving immediate fishery resource use problems.

78. Some delegates indicated that there was insufficient research-related collaboration at the sub-regional level in particular on the management of stocks, harmonization of technical management measures, or prioritization of common research efforts. Cases of successful

collaboration were also mentioned, for example, between coastal States of the Black Sea or among EC member countries. The Council felt that efforts should be continued to strengthen cooperative sub-regional and regional research activities.

79. It was proposed to facilitate meetings of national research directors who could exchange experiences in current research activities, identify common research priorities, agree on joint coordination and implementation of collaborative programmes, and formulate cooperative research projects. It was also suggested that individual Mediterranean institutes could be charged with the coordination of collaborative research activities on specific research issues, e.g. stock identification, diseases, etc. There was general agreement that a regional meeting of this kind would be most useful for detailed discussion and exchange of information related to fishery research interests and activities in the region, as a contribution to the SIFR follow-up process.

80. The observer from the EC described activities on fisheries research supported by them, including 31 quantitative and qualitative fisheries studies focusing on Mediterranean fisheries. The observer from the EC also referred to a recent paper entitled "European fisheries research: Current position and prospects", prepared by the Commission of the European Communities, and emphasized the need for functional fisheries research. The observer from the EC indicated that the fifth meeting of directors of fishery research organizations in the European Community will be held in Greece during the second half of 1994, where Mediterranean research problems would also be addressed. The Council expressed the wish that this meeting be followed by another one that would include research directors from all Mediterranean countries. It indicated that this meeting could provide an opportunity to present research priorities and to formulate general lines of collaborative research programmes.

81. The Secretariat proposed to the Council that (i) information on current fisheries research in each Mediterranean country be assembled, possibly by a questionnaire exercise, (ii) selected countries be assisted on request by one or two consultants in the formulation of specific project proposals on urgent research issues, and (iii) the EC be encouraged to discuss details on possible financial support required to facilitate the participation of national research directors from all Mediterranean countries at the envisaged EC meeting in Greece. The Council stressed that the use of consultants should be related to cases where the need had been identified as a result of the meeting of Directors of Research Institutes referred to above.

82. The observer from the EC confirmed that at the present stage he could not commit his organization on possible funding of the attendance of research directors from non-EC member countries, but he indicated that, in principle, there should be no problem to provide the funds required.

83. The Council recommended that a cooperative research programme be undertaken to investigate and compare trends in resource abundance in the different basins of the Mediterranean. This programme should focus on demersal species of particular importance such as hake and red mullet, but particular concern should also be attached to understanding the reason for current Mediterranean-wide declines in anchovy stocks. The Committee on Fisheries Management was requested to develop more specific plans for such a Mediterranean-wide initiative, which should include other interested organizations.

84. The observer from Japan informed the Council about details of a proposed survey of Atlantic bluefin tuna larvae in the Mediterranean to be undertaken by Japan in 1994. He invited the GFCM delegates to consider this proposal, particularly in the light of desirable participation of Mediterranean coastal countries. The Council took note of the presentation, several delegates indicating that the proposal would require further study by their national authorities.

85. Research priorities for aquaculture were identified by the MEDRAP II seminar on aquaculture research sub-networking, held in 1991 in Cyprus. The identified priority areas included research on (i) diversification of cultured species and culture systems, (ii) nutrition and feed technology, (iii) pathology, (iv) interactions between aquaculture and the environment, and (v) hatchery technology and breeding. Specific research interests were focussed on: species such as Puntazzo puntazzo, Dentex dentex and penaeid shrimps; offshore technology; nutritional requirements of Mediterranean species, in particular Sparus aurata, and dry food feeding of larval stages; potential pathogens, pathological problems related to water quality and nutritional deficiencies; environmental criteria for aquaculture site selection, environmental impacts due to aquaculture waste loadings, and coastal lagoon management.

86. The Council was informed that as a follow-up to this MEDRAP II activity and to Study on International Fisheries Research (SIFR) a Study on Aquaculture Development and Research Needs in Africa was currently being implemented by FAO supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, IFREMER and the Commission of European Communities. The strategy selected for this study was to involve directly selected countries in the preparation of a national report, following a standard format, which would contain information on (1) the present situation of the institutions dealing with aquaculture-related research (their programmes, means available, coordination with development and planning), (2) the plans for future development of aquaculture, and (3) the main short- and medium-term priority items for research related to aquaculture development in each country. A synthesis of the national reports would lead to the preparation of an indicative action plan. The Council was informed that the North African countries were preparing such a synthesis report and such an indicative action plan.

REVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL FISHERIES COUNCIL FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

87. The Council had before it document GFCM/XX/93/10, which described the developments that had taken place following the expression of interest by the European Community in becoming a member of the GFCM, which posed some issues regarding wider implications for the structure and functions of the Council, and raised the problem of institutional mechanisms for the future overall coordination of the activities of the networks established by the Mediterranean Regional Aquaculture Project (MEDRAP II).

88. On the issue of EC membership in the GFCM, the Council noted the views expressed by the Executive Committee at its Fiftieth Session in Rome on 22 and 23 June 1992 and the follow-up action taken by the Secretariat. It further noted that no further action could be taken at this stage until such time as the EC had given its formal notification of the basis on which the EC and/or its Member States wished to participate in the GFCM and, in particular, whether the Community intended to replace its Member States in the GFCM or to exercise membership rights on an alternative basis with its Member States that were presently Members of GFCM.

89. On the matter of the wider implications for the structure and functions of GFCM, the Council was of the view that no general changes were required to the objectives and functions of the GFCM as set out in the Agreement, although some reference should now be made to aquaculture, in view of its increasing importance for the region. In this connection, it was suggested that the functions of the Council as set out in Article III be amended to include the following "to promote programmes for mariculture and coastal fisheries enhancement". The more pressing issue, however, was how to improve the functioning of the existing institutional mechanisms and to make that functioning more cost-effective, thus enabling the Council to fulfill its recognized role as the focal institution for fisheries management and development in the Mediterranean. In this connection, the importance of the two functions of the preparation of scientific assessments and advice and the use of such scientific assessments and advice in the taking of management action was stressed.

90. During the course of the discussions, various proposals were made for improving the functioning and cost-effectiveness of the existing institutional mechanisms. The Council urged strongly that general sessions of the GFCM should be held not less than once every biennium as provided for in Article II.4 of the Agreement. Meetings of all four sub-regional Technical Consultations on stock assessment as a matter of priority should be held during the inter-sessional period and the results channelled to the Council through the Committee on Fisheries Management. In this context it was suggested that the Committee on Fisheries Management could usefully meet immediately prior to the biennial session of the Council to prepare recommendations for the Council. This could also save on travel expenses of participants. The relationship between the functions of the Committee and that of the Council itself might also need to be more clearly defined.

91. The Executive Committee was seen as playing a vital role in the functioning of the GFCM during the intersessional periods. In this context the Council recommended that measures should be taken to broaden and enhance participation in the Executive Committee to make it more representative of the region and to enhance its powers to act on behalf of the GFCM during the intersessional periods. This would require amendments to Rule X of the Rules of Procedure. In the meantime, the Council recommended that transitory measures be taken to allow interested countries to participate in the deliberations of the Executive Committee and to strengthen its executive functions.

92. On the matter of the future overall coordination of the activities of the various aquaculture-related networks, the Council welcomed the recommendation of the MEDRAP II Steering Committee that this responsibility be entrusted to GFCM. It also recognized the importance and urgency of providing some institutional machinery to ensure continued coordination of the network activities to make sure that the achievements of the MEDRAP II project were not placed in jeopardy. The Council was generally in favour of the establishment of a separate Committee on Aquaculture for this purpose. It requested the Secretariat to prepare the necessary proposals and report on the administrative and financial implications and define the mandate of such establishment so that it could take an informed decision on the matter at its next session. In the meantime it recommended that the task of overall coordination of aquaculture network activities during the forthcoming biennium should be carried out by the Executive Committee, assisted by a small number of representatives from GFCM member countries specially competent in aquaculture matters. This would provide valuable experience

in coordination functions actually required, and would at the same time provide experience with the concept of an Executive Committee with broadened and enhanced participation, pending the adoption of the necessary amendments to the Rules of Procedure. Coordinators of the individual networks (CIHEAM and MAP/PAP-RAC) should also participate in discussions related to the aquaculture networks.

FINANCIAL SITUATION AND BUDGET: PROPOSAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBER STATES

93. The Secretariat presented document GFCM/XX/93/11. The Council was informed that the Agreement that created GFCM did not provide it with an autonomous budget and that the FAO Fisheries Department was supporting the cost of the Secretariat and also the costs of the meetings organized by the Council. The FAO allocation to the GFCM was about US$ 700,000 per biennium.

94. It was furthermore explained that a budget to meet the requirements of the Council and its subsidiary bodies would require additional resources estimated at US$ 400,000 per biennium, excluding technical support costs provided by the FAO Fisheries Department. The Council noted that the short-fall in financial resources applied also to the other FAO regional fishery bodies.

95. The Council reviewed the possibility of reducing meeting costs and requested that an in-depth evaluation of the need for certain expenditure, particularly that of interpretation and non-staff travel costs, be made. It was suggested that some technical consultations be held in one language only, provided that such savings do not alter the quality of the discussions. The Council called upon the member countries hosting such consultations to play an active role in the preparation of the GFCM meetings. This point of view was shared by the delegate of Morocco.

96. The Council took note of a detailed schedule showing cost estimates for meetings, costs of the Secretariat, publications and other miscellaneous expenses prepared by the Secretariat and expressed its concern about the high cost of some of the meetings. The Council requested the Secretariat to investigate further the possibilities of reducing these costs by organizing technical consultations in one language only as meetings of scientists and experts should not require multi-lingual interpretation. The need for interpretation at the technical meetings should not be regarded a rule, but rather an exception. The attention of the Council was drawn to the fact that FAO was normally insisting that the countries concerned agreed to the waiver of the Rule. The Council stressed that such rules must be applied flexibly. Any deterioration of the quality of the meetings should of course be avoided.

97. Some delegations enquired about the possibility of reducing or even cancelling non-staff travel costs and assumed that member countries would take responsibility for their own travel expenses.

98. Concerning the statutory provisions for an autonomous GFCM budget, the Secretariat informed the Council that the last FAO Conference gave enlarged powers to FAO regional bodies which included the possibility of having autonomous budgets but it was stressed that an

arrangement of this type would imply direct contributions from member countries to an autonomous GFCM budget. The delegate of France stated that his country could consider the possibility of such a contribution provided that it is allocated to priority actions decided by the Council within its activities. However, it was agreed that a discussion on an autonomous budget for the Council was not yet opportune.

99. The Council agreed to a proposal made by the delegation of Spain which gave priority to the following meetings:

- one meeting of the Council of GFCM every two years
- one meeting of the Executive Committee every two years during the intersessional period
- one meeting of the Committee on Fisheries Management every two years, to be held immediately prior to the Council session
- four technical consultations during the intersessional period.

100. The Council recommended that the Secretariat revise the meeting schedule proposed for the 1994/95 biennium, by substituting the proposed meeting of the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics with a meeting of the Committee on Fisheries Management. It further considered that elimination of interpretation for two of the Technical Consultations would free sufficient budgetary resources to hold the Council session, which was seen as the highest priority.

101. The Council appealed to the FAO Director-General for additional support to the Council and called upon its member countries, the EC and other possible donors, to take responsibility for the costs of organizing some technical consultations, working parties, expert consultations and other meetings for which FAO could not provide funds. In this context, the Council gave high priority to the joint meeting with ICCAT on the management of large pelagic fish in the Mediterranean, to a meeting of Directors of Fishery Research and to the proposed Committee on Aquaculture Development.

102. The Council considered that its present Session should initiate a new era in the life of GFCM. It took note with satisfaction of the support to its activities by its members. Some delegates emphasized the need for reviewing the structure of the Council with a view to ensuring that it can play fully its role as a regional fishery management body and to allow it to address its increasing responsibilities vis-à-vis the possible membership of the EC and any conclusions which might arise from the UN Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, starting the following week in New York.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

103. The delegate of France informed the Council that a meeting of fishermen's organizations of European countries would be organized in July 1993 to discuss technical measures that would be proposed with a view to better management of fishery resources in the Mediterranean. He expressed the wish that a similar meeting grouping all Mediterranean countries be organized in other regions in the GFCM area. He also called for representatives of interprofessional organizations of the fisheries sector to be included in delegations to the Council.

104. The observer from Japan informed the Council of the proposed changes of criteria for including species in the appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which, if approved, could have serious implications for fisheries resources management by the responsible fishery authorities and organizations. The Secretariat informed the Council that in this respect it had contacted the CITES Secretariat and would also consult with GATT as the responsible international organization for trade issues.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

105. The delegate of Malta proposed that Mr. R. Conde de Saro (Spain) be elected Chairman. This proposal was seconded by several delegations who proposed Mr. Y. Ouati (Morocco) as First Vice-Chairman and Mr. C. Agius (Malta) as Second Vice-Chairman. The Council unanimously elected those three officers.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

106. In accordance with Rule II, paragraph 1 of the GFCM Rules of Procedure, the Council, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO, decides on the time and place of the next session, taking into account the Council's requirements and the terms of the invitation of the country in which the session is to be held.

107. Concerning the venue of the Twenty-first Session, the delegate of Spain informed the Council that his country offered to host this Session of the Council. The Council accepted this offer with gratitude. Dates approximately two years hence were recommended.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

108. The report of the Twentieth Session of the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean was adopted on 9 July 1993.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the session
3. Consideration of the reports of the Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Sessions of the Executive Committee
4. Intersessional activities: March 1989 - June 1993
5. Recent trends in Mediterranean fisheries and environment
6. Strategy for improving fishery statistics in the GFCM area
7. Fisheries management: possible options
8. Cooperation with other organizations concerned with fisheries and environment matters in the GFCM area
9. Fishery research: needs and priorities in the Mediterranean
10. Review of the Structure and Functions of the Council
11. Financial situation and budget: proposal for contributions by Member States
12. Any other matters
13. Election of Officers
14. Date and place of the Twenty-first Session
15. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

GFCM/XX/93/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda and Timetable
GFCM/XX/93/2	Report of the Fiftieth Session of the GFCM Executive Committee, Rome, 22-23 June 1992
GFCM/XX/93/3	Report of the Forty-Ninth Session of the GFCM Executive Committee, Rome, 11-12 March 1991
GFCM/XX/93/4	Intersessional activities (March 1989 - June 1993)
GFCM/XX/93/5	Recent Trends in the Fisheries and Environment in the GFCM Area
GFCM/XX/93/6	Strategy for Improvement of Fishery Statistics in the GFCM Area
GFCM/XX/93/7	Fisheries Management: Possible Options
GFCM/XX/93/8 Corr.	Cooperation with other organizations concerned with fisheries and environment matters in the GFCM Area
GFCM/XX/93/9	Fisheries Research: Needs and Priorities in the Mediterranean Region
GFCM/XX/93/10	Review of the Structure and Functions of the Council
GFCM/XX/93/11	Financial Situation and Budget: Proposal for Contributions by Member States
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.1	Provisional List of Documents
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.2	List of Participants
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.3	Report of the Nineteenth Session of GFCM, Livorno, Italy, 27 February - 3 March 1989
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.4	Report of the Eighth Session of the GFCM Committee on Fisheries Management, Rome, 28-31 October 1991

GFCM/XX/93/Inf.5	Report of the GFCM-ICCAT Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Stocks of Large Pelagic Fishes in the Mediterranean Sea, Bari, Italy, 21-27 June 1990 (available only in English)
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.6	Report of the GFCM/ICCAT Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Stocks of Large Pelagics in the Mediterranean Sea, Iraklion, Crete, Greece, 17-23 September 1992
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.7	Report of the Sixth Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Balearic and Gulf of Lions Statistical Division, Casablanca, Morocco, 28 May - 2 June 1990 (available only in French)
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.8	Report on the Red Coral Symposium, Vicenza, Italy, 16-17 January 1991
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.9	Report of the GFCM Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics, Rome, Italy, 22-24 May 1991
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.10	Report of the Fourth Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Eastern Mediterranean, Thessaloniki, Greece, 7-11 October 1991 (available only in English)
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.11	Report of the Second Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea, Ankara, Turkey, 15-19 February 1993 (available only in English)
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.12	GFCM Studies and Reviews No. 63
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.13	GFCM Studies and Reviews No. 64 (available only in English)
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.14	Trends in Catches and Landings - Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries: 1972 - 1991, FAO Fisheries Circular No. 855.4 (available only in English)
GFCM/XX/93/Inf.15	GFCM Statistical Bulletin No.9

APPENDIX D

SPEECH BY THE HON. MINISTER FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, MR. LAWRENCE GATT, ON THE INAUGURATION OF THE XXth SESSION OF THE GENERAL FISHERIES COUNCIL FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN ON 5 JULY 1993 AT THE SUNCREST HOTEL, QAWRA

Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

I feel very honoured to open this twentieth session of the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean and most happy to welcome you to the shores of our island so centrally situated in this inland sea.

We are very conscious, owing to our geographical position, of the diversity of cultures in the Mediterranean region. Indeed, the many civilisations that have flourished here in the course of history have left their mark and more than a few vestiges in our archaeology, art and architecture, as well as in our legal system and social institutions.

All these elements of our historical heritage have gone into the formation of our national character and culture. There is, I need hardly add, a component of maritime culture in this context, since our people have quite a tradition of seafaring. You may have heard of the artistic appeal of the traditional Maltese fishing craft, and I hope while you are here that you will have the occasion to see some of these colourful vessels.

These considerations apart - we are well aware of the need to modernise our fisheries sector. In this respect, we are grateful to FAO for the advice and assistance we have received both as regards the institutional and technical aspects. We are also looking forward to benefiting from the expertise of the participants at this session.

Mr. Chairman,

This session of the GFCM is being held at a very opportune time when the world is debating the unfolding of the implementation of Agenda 21 as adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio last year.

The Commission for Sustainable Development of the United Nations proposed that a system of monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21 through national, regional and interregional structures be created. This is intended to ensure that programmes of action based on Agenda 21 are adopted at each appropriate level. It is important that existing organisations are not

duplicated so as not to compete for the limited resources available. With this in mind, it might be timely for the GFCM to consider reviewing its terms of reference in the light of new concepts developed in various international fora.

The adoption of comprehensive conservation measures for various kinds of fisheries, including stricter regulatory measures, the divising of ways and means to ensure compatibility between aquaculture and the more traditional fishing practices, and
the application of the latest technologies in data collection and analysis, such as the use of satellite images, are all emerging topics which need serious consideration.

The GFCM has clearly established itself as the leader in coordinating Research and Development activities in the Mediterranean as a region. It is therefore well placed to offer its experience and existing infrastructure to the Commission for Sustainable Development as the regional vehicle for implementing strategies deriving from Agenda 21 with respect to Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Mr Chairman,

Malta is well aware of the problems facing fisheries in the Mediterranean and adjacent seas and readily recognizes that international concerted action is the only hope of ensuring a sustainable fishery. It is therefore expected that a well-established body such as the GFCM assumes the role of leadership in the execution of fisheries management and conservation policies.

It is important that such policies are characterised by the objective of rational exploitation of the fish resources over the long term.

Such policies should be complemented by a significant rehabilitation programme through the establishment of marine parks, conservation areas, artificial reefs and by pollution control. All this presumes a sound scientific understanding of the marine ecosystems and hence the need to strengthen GFCM's existing commitment to research and development programmes particularly in the discipline of fishery statistics.

I understand that the Food and Agriculture Organisation has given priority to the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition adopted at the International Conference on Nutrition last year. This Plan of Action includes the incorporation of nutritional objectives, considerations and components into development policies and programmes.

Non-communicable diseases related to unhealthy life styles and inappropriate diets are becoming increasingly prevalent in many countries of the Mediterranean. Malta has a very high incidence of cardio-vascular diseases, obesity, hypertension, diabetes mellitus and some cancers with immense social and health care costs. These are deemed to be related to our unduly high consumption of sugars and animal fats. The Government of Malta has adopted a National Policy Statement on Food and Nutrition. In this statement emphasis is laid on the need to increase availability and consumption of fish as a means to improve dietary patterns. The Plan of Action for Nutrition calls for vigorous and concerted efforts at all levels to improve the nutritional status of all. The ICN was such a great success largely because of the regional and sub-regional level preparatory activities which preceded the conference itself.

Aware of the present state of Mediterranean fisheries and the likely sources of fish protein in the future, Malta has, like most other countries, given importance to the newly emerging sector of aquaculture and, indeed, has established itself as a leader in offshore fish farming technology.

Such developments are to be encouraged as they have very important implications for fisheries in general, not only in the socio-economic sense but perhaps more importantly from the biological aspect. Pressure on natural stocks is reduced. Existing resources in the fisheries sector both physical and human, can be re-oriented for application in the aquaculture sector. Variability and flexibility on the markets is greatly improved. The interest shown by GFCM in the activities of MEDRAP 2 is a clear pointer to this interrelationship.

Malta has recently adopted a Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands which regulates the structural and infrastructural development process. Amongst the policy guidelines included in this plan are social and environmental considerations and implications of fisheries development, management and conservation; aquaculture development and monitoring; market and marketing structures; and the establishment of marine parks properly identified and managed. Through such regulatory process Malta hopes to achieve a rational and sustainable development of both fisheries and aquaculture with the participation of all other sectors of economic and social development; thus avoiding as much as possible conflicting and competing measures being adopted unilaterally by each sector.

Mr. Chairman,

I am sure that the delegates at this Session, who are all experts in the different disciplines being discussed during the next few days, will contribute towards finding solutions to the problems outlined in the Agenda.

I would like to conclude on a lighter note. I know that the delegates to the conference have a hard task in front of them but I feel it to be worthwhile for them to try and explore the beauties of our islands, including, of course, the culinary aspect, as part of a relaxed stay among us.

APPENDIX E

OPENING STATEMENT OF DR. W. KRONE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL A.I., FAO FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Minister Lawrence Gatt
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates and Observers
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure for me to address this Twentieth Session of the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean. Mr. Edouard Saouma, the Director-General of FAO, has asked me to extend to you his best wishes for a successful meeting.

I would like to express a particular note of gratitude to the Government of Malta for the fine preparatory work carried out to ensure a pleasant and fruitful session.

Your presence in such numbers and with such strong delegations is taken by us as a continued affirmation of the importance attached by your Governments and organizations to the work and role of the Council. It is a unique forum for the regular examination of major technical and policy issues confronting Mediterranean fisheries and for the promotion and strengthening of multilateral cooperation in this region.

Mr. Chairman, before going into the substantive matters on your agenda, I would first like to introduce to you the new Secretary of GFCM:

Dr. Habib Ben Alaya is already well known to most of you as Regional Fisheries Officer for the Near East and a fisheries specialist from a Mediterranean country (Tunisia). He took up the new post of Senior Liaison Officer and was designated Secretary of GFCM in January 1990 to replace Mr. R. Griffiths, who retired at that time. I think you will find the new Secretary a professional devoted to the objectives and cause of your Council.

Mr. Chairman, the agenda proposed for this session is exceptionally challenging and wide ranging. From the documents prepared for your discussions, you will have noted that the session is expected to pay particular attention to the environmental aspects of fisheries. This is natural after the Rio Summit on Environment and Development last year. The Agenda 21 adopted in Rio is particularly pertinent in this part of the world, looking at the alarming situation of fisheries in the Black Sea and the increasing eutrophication which is affecting various semi-enclosed sub-regions of the Mediterranean. Evidence was presented at the GFCM Technical Consultation on the Eastern Mediterranean (Thessalonika, Greece, October 1991) and at the

GFCM Technical Consultation on the Black Sea (Ankara, Turkey, February 1993) that eutrophication is now a widely spread phenomenon in many parts of the Mediterranean, due mainly to the run-off of nutrient materials into these seas. Abuse in the use of pesticides and fertilizers, the misuse of water in industrial activities and the mismanagement of natural resources constitute a real threat to Mediterranean fisheries.

The most important threat to the marine resources remains, however, overfishing and the indiscriminate use of unselective and sometimes harmful fishing methods. You have among the documents prepared by the Secretariat for your discussion some assessment of the current situation although data on landed catches, fishing effort, recruitment and other physical and biological parameters, remain partial and sometimes inaccurate despite recent improvement. The reaction of the GFCM member countries to our STATLANT questionnaires is often incomplete. Your Committee on Fisheries Management has emphasized the need for continued and comprehensive data collection and exchange of information on the fisheries in the region. Something more serious has to be done about it and we are therefore advancing a project idea for your consideration, which aims at improving the collection of fishery statistics in the Mediterranean with a view to better management of the fishery resources on which so many people in your countries depend for their livelihood.

The catch of foreign fishing fleets operating in international waters, i.e., in the Western Basin of the Mediterranean and which exploit the large pelagic resources, is an almost completely unknown factor and this limits the assessment of these resources. The GFCM Secretariat will continue in its efforts to gather information on the magnitude of catches and fishing effort of these non-coastal fishing countries. This is made particularly difficult because of the growing practice of reflagging of vessels to flags of convenience which renders the control of the original flag State extremely difficult, if not impossible. Often these vessels employ larger size driftnets which violate the UN moratorium on the use of such fishing gear and also the relevant EEC Regulation.

The Mediterranean for most of its waters is high seas and although the continental shelves are usually very narrow, there are some demersal straddling stocks, such as in the Gulf of Lions and in the Gulf of Gabes. However, the major high seas fishing efforts are directed at the highly migratory species. Article 64 of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea makes it very clear that "... coastal States and other States whose nationals fish in the region ... shall cooperate directly or through appropriate international organizations with a view to ensuring conservation and promoting the objective of optimum utilization of such species throughout the region."

Mr. Chairman, you have such an appropriate international organization and we are just inaugurating its Twentieth Session.

Consideration of high seas issues was also prominent at the Rio Summit. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 includes a special section on the sustainable use and conservation of living marine resources of the high seas and recommends the holding of an international Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. This Conference will start its substantive session next week in New York. Your meeting is therefore very timely, if your Council should wish to use this opportunity to send a clear message to that Conference.

In this context, I should also mention our ongoing efforts to obtain a consensus on an International Agreement on the Flagging of Vessels Fishing on the High Seas. During the last session of the FAO Council two weeks ago, this matter was further advanced and we hope to get it approved at the next FAO Conference in November.

Mr. Chairman, the present situation of fisheries in the Mediterranean calls for limitations and, in many cases, reductions of fishing effort together with other restrictive measures, especially as concerns demersal resources and large pelagic stocks. Several options for the management of Mediterranean fisheries are being presented in the documentation but no doubt there will be other proposals. Your Council is the right body to decide on appropriate management schemes. The Convention setting up your Council in 1949, as amended in May 1963 and in July 1976, provides the legal and institutional framework for establishing management systems which would ensure a more sustainable utilization of fishery resources in these areas.

In this respect, your Council and its Secretariat has received the most valuable cooperation of other organizations, notably the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the EEC and UNEP. We are looking forward to your Council's advice on how the cooperation with these Organizations and others having an interest in the Mediterranean fisheries can be further intensified.

Mr. Chairman, we must, of course, all clearly see that each Mediterranean country has its own socio-economic problems which limit and/or delay the implementation of management measures, particularly as not much information is available to evaluate the loss in jobs and earnings of such measures. Such data must be available in order to allow your Governments to make management decisions on an informed basis. New efforts have therefore to be made to obtain more data on the socio-economic implications of different management options.

It should be clear that we need less talk about "what to do" but more decision on "how to do it". The example of the red coral illustrates the limits of a method of management which is not acceptable to all concerned. Mr Chairman, we hope to have your Council's views on how to assist in the setting up of a realistic and efficient scheme for the management of resources and the protection of the marine environment, the rehabilitation of collapsing fisheries in the Black Sea, the protection of some endangered species, the improvement of fisheries statistics, the strengthening of cooperation among Mediterranean research institutions and the training of young scientists in the assessment of fish stocks.

Mr. Chairman, the GFCM, which was created in 1949 under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, at present has no autonomous budget, although this is provided for in the Agreement. All activities carried out are financed by FAO from its Regular Programme resources and thus are subject to the overall availability of funds in FAO. Financial constraints which FAO had to face over the last couple of years have, therefore, also affected the GFCM activities. During the last three years the Fisheries Department had, in fact, to face what economists like to call "negative growth". The present Session of your Council should have been held in 1992. It had to be postponed to this year precisely because of budgetary restrictions. We believe that such a situation must be avoided in future, if your Council is to play its role fully in the management of fishery resources in the area of its competence.

FAO currently provides about US $ 700 000 per biennium for the activities of the GFCM. We hope to be able to keep up this level of support, but we shall need a clear commitment of the GFCM membership - and not only a moral one! Moreover, we see a need to deal more regularly with fishery management issues in this region and this will require more frequent meetings of working parties, committees and of your Executive Committee, if not of your Council itself. To do this, we estimate that additional contributions will be required from membership of about 50 percent of that presently provided by FAO. We are fully aware of budgetary constraints in your countries but we ask for your understanding. It is your body and it is your responsibility to enable it to do its work. For its part, FAO will continue to give its full technical and financial support.

Mr. Chairman, the Mediterranean Sea is an important fishing area. It is also an important fish consumption area. The fishery sector has close interactions with other vital sectors of the economy, such as tourism. The need for an integrated approach is therefore evident. This requires collaboration between many different authorities and administrations at national and regional level.

Your Council provides the forum for inter-country cooperation in the management and development of fishery resources. You do not need an additional management body. You do not need another Convention. You do not need more resolutions and declarations. You do need to use more fully what you have got, and put into effect what you have already decided. I hope that this Session of your Council will confirm that this is indeed your resolve.

Thank you.

APPENDIX F

REPORT OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE PRINCIPLES TO UNDERLINE THE NEW CONVENTION ON FISHERIES AND THE CONSERVATION OF LIVING MARINE RESOURCES IN THE BLACK SEA

The representatives of Bulgaria, Roumania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine present at the time of this meeting, with the participation of the representative of FAO - Dr John Caddy, held a working meeting during the Nineteenth Session of the Joint Commission for Black Sea Fisheries founded on 7 July 1959, on the 3rd and 4th of June 1993, in Sozopol, Bulgaria.

The Ad hoc working group reports on the present serious ecological situation in the Black Sea, as described in the report of the GFCM Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea, which was held in Ankara, Turkey, 15-19 February 1993 and the associated problems with fisheries and living marine resources.

The parties present agreed to the following:

(1) - to prepare for signing as soon as possible a new convention on the fisheries and living resources in the Black Sea, with the participation of all Coastal States

(2) - to fulfill this activity by cooperative efforts, working through coordinators. Two coordinators were nominated to carry out the following actions described in this report notably: Dr Peter Kolarov (Bulgaria) and Mr Erdogan Akyuz (Turkey)

(3) - to present written comments on the principles of the new Convention, on the drafted outlines for a new Convention prepared by Russia and Ukraine, or on any other draft Convention tabled by any other Black Sea State which is made available to them. These comments or draft outlines for the new Convention to be received by the coordinator on or before 30 October 1993

(4) - that the coordinators should send all participants a copy of all proposals or comments received by 30 November 1993

(5) - to hold a meeting of experts, including legal advisors and representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of all Black Sea States, scheduled for February 1994, Istanbul, Turkey. The Turkish party agrees to announce to the rest of the Coastal States the time and place of this February meeting two months in advance. At this February meeting, the Coastal States will agree to a working version of the new Convention, should define a time and place for further special meeting of their authorized representatives for finalizing the new Convention. This draft of the new Convention will then be presented to each government for

(6) - the Convention should be administered by a Commission made up of officially authorized representatives and experts of all Black Sea Coastal States. This Commission will hold annual sessions in each member country in accordance with an agreed rotation principle. It will be chaired by a representative of the host country where the current session is being held

(7) - the parties considered that the work of the Commission will be greatly facilitated by a permanent Secretariat. The Commission and its Committees and Secretariat will have their own budgets. The Secretariat would coordinate the sessions and the work of its committees, who would be responsible for the cooperative work programs, including the cooperative database which will be available to member countries. It would present a financial statement of the annual sessions of the Commission. The Secretariat will coordinate the work and the links of the Commission with concerned organizations such as UNDP, FAO, GFCM, the GEF programme, and other international organizations and projects. The existence of an active Fishery Commission with its Secretariat and committees will improve the economic cooperation between the Coastal States and will provide a basis for a sustainable development of the fisheries sector and the conservation of living resources

(8) - the work of the Commission, its committees and permanent Secretariat requires a significant level of funding, which the respective national administrations cannot provide alone and extra funding will be needed from international organizations, donors or projects. This situation is brought to the attention of UNDP, World Bank, UNEP, the GEF Programme, donor organizations, with request that they assist financially in establishing and functioning of this Commission for the Black Sea Fisheries. They are requested to respond to this communication through the coordinators identified under item 3 above.

The parties will present this report to the FAO, with the request that it be placed before the next session of the GEF Programme Steering Committee, June 1993, Varna, Bulgaria, and to the next meeting to the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean, Valletta, Malta, July 1993.

This report is signed on the 4th June 1993 in Sozopol, Bulgaria in Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian and English versions.

For the Delegation of Republic of Bulgaria:

(signed)

.....

Nikolay Kissyov, Chief, State Inspectorate of Fisheries
of the Ministry of Agriculture.

For the Delegation of Federation of Russia:

(signed)

.....

Tatyana Spivakova, Chief of Department, State Committee of Fisheries, Moscow.

For the Delegation of Roumania:

(signed)

.....

Dimitry Budescu, Chief of Department, Ministry of Food Industry, Bucharest.

For the Delegation of Ukraine:

(signed)

.....

Stanislav Klamentiev, First Deputy Chairman of the State Committee of Fisheries, Kiev.

For the Delegation of the Republic of Turkey:

(signed)

.....

Dr. Altan Acara, Representative, State Planning Organization, Prime Ministry of Turkey.

APPENDIX G

DECISIONS, DIRECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF GFCM

	Paragraph
Directory of Fisheries personnel	
- Provide information on staff changes	13
Recent trends in Mediterranean Fisheries and Environment Evidence for changes in fisheries production	
- Monitor the spread of jelly fish for Mnemiopsis leydei	23
- Study pelagic food webb, anchovy, sardine and the role of jelly fish predators in nutrient enriched systems	23
Overview of the current status of the Mediterranean resources	
- Devote more resources to assessment of fish stocks	25
- Promote cooperative work on developing G.I.S.	25
- Encourage protection of habitats of demersal fish stocks	27
- Respect ICCAT regulations and provide catch and biological data	28
Exotic species	
- register occurrence of new species	29
Pelagic stocks	
- Support regular joint meetings with ICCAT	32
High seas fisheries	
- Support the development of common minimum standards of fishery management resources	35
Statistics	
- Organize meetings to review STATLANT B forms	42

GFCM Statistical Yearbook

- Consider feasibility of more cost-effective data transfer systems 43
- Investigate incidental effects on fishing 47
- Provide advice on size limits of fishing vessels 48

Data needs for responsible fishing

- Develop data base in support of management 49

Fisheries management: possible options 50-57

- Prepare a review of existing regulations 55
- Develop a draft of "Principles for the management of fisheries in the Mediterranean" 56

Cooperation with other organizations 58-71

- Establish a joint GFCM/ICCAT ad hoc Working Group on Large Pelagic Species 61
- Build-up closer collaboration with ICSEM 63
- Provide information on the Mediterranean Action Plan 64
- Obtain information from IOC/SARP on the collapse of anchovy fisheries 66
- Coordinate activities of the aquaculture networks 67
- Support sub-regional research and development programmes implemented by UMA 69

Fishery research needs 72-86

- Formulate project proposal focusing on specific research needs and subregional or regional relevance 74
- Define urgent research needs and priorities 77
- Strengthen cooperative subregional and regional research activities 78

- Facilitate meetings of national research directors 79

- Undertake cooperative research to compare trends in resource abundance in the different basins in the Mediterranean 83

Functions and structure of the Council 87-92

- amend agreement to include reference to aquaculture 89

- organize biennial sessions of the Council and introduce cost effectiveness of the existing institutional mechanisms 90

- Open sessions of the Executive Committee 91

- Establish Committee on Aquaculture 92

Financial situation and budget 93-102

- Introduce measures to reduce meeting costs 95

- Apply flexibly FAO rules on interpretation 96

- Revise schedule of meetings 99-100

- eliminate interpretation at technical consultations 100

- Appeal for additional support from the Director-General of FAO and call to members to assure greater responsibility in organizing sessions 101

- Review structure of Council to allow it to address its increasing responsibilities 102

Any other matters 103-104

- Include in delegations representatives of inter-professional organizations of the fisheries sector 103

- Consider implications of CITES for fisheries resource management 104

Officer-bearers

- Messrs R. Conde de Saro (Spain), Y. Ouati (Morocco), C. Agius (Malta), were elected as Chairman, First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman, respectively 105

Date and Place

- Two years hence in Spain.

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